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Pediatric Fluid Loss

ONE PRETTY GOOD SIGN of how sick children are happens to be their capillary refill. We all know about capillary refill in a child. You squeeze a thumbnail and you say "capillary refill," and by the time you've said the last "1," the fingernail should be red again. If you press the fingernail, release it, say "capillary refill" and it's still white, this child probably has a very low blood pressure level and is verging on shock. So, always press on the child's fingernail when you are trying to estimate fluid loss.

—WILLIS A. WINGERT, MD

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